



## Klamath Network Featured Creature

### February 2005

### Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*)

#### FIELD NOTES:

##### General Description:

Tailed frogs can be identified by their small size (1-2 inches), vertical pupils in their eyes, no visible eardrums, and small bumps on their skin. Tadpoles have a distinct round mouth used for suction to rocks. Adults may have a dark eye stripe extending from the tip of the snout to the eyes, and adult males have a unique “tail”, which is actually used for reproduction.

##### Ecology

Tailed frogs live in cold, fast-moving, perennial mountain streams with large stone or cobble bottoms. They prefer streams with undisturbed forest canopy and no fish. They are mostly nocturnal and aquatic, but adults may forage on land during cool, wet conditions.



Photo by Brome McCreary, USGS-FRESC

*An Ascaphus adult with vertical pupils and dark eye stripe is pictured above, and a tadpole's round suction mouth is shown below. Dark and light morphs of Ascaphus are common (below left).*



Photo by Bill Leonard

##### Status:

Federal Species of Concern  
Sensitive Species (OR),  
Species of Special Concern (CA)

##### Distribution:

Tailed frogs are endemic to the Pacific Northwest of North America. They range from British Columbia to western Montana and southward to Northern California.

##### Where to see it in the Klamath Parks:

You can find *Ascaphus* along cool, mountain streams in Crater Lake NP, Oregon Caves NM, Redwood NSP, and Whiskeytown NRA.



Photo by Brome McCreary, USGS-FRESC

#### Fun Facts:

- *Ascaphus* is believed to be the most primitive frog living.
- Tailed frogs are voiceless.
- Tadpoles can take up to 4 years to metamorphose.
- *Ascaphus* is one of the longest lived frogs in the world (up to 20 yrs).
- The tongue of tailed frogs is attached to back of its mouth, so it can't flip it out to grab prey like other frogs.
- *Ascaphus* have muscles to wag the “tail” and free-floating ribs.
- The closest living relative of *Ascaphus* is found only in New Zealand.